

## **we could be happy** by laxis

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**Summary:**

"Relax man, I'm not here to start a fight. Although it really was fun to bash your pretty little face in." He took another drag, smiling his goddamn smile, all flawless and white and entirely too smooth that it should have been off-putting.

"And yet you still call me pretty boy," Steve countered while crossing his arms and leaning against his own car. His tone was relaxed, but his eyes challenging.

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A little addition to the season finale. Steve drives Billy home and they meet in the parking lot during the Snow Ball.

## we could be happy

Billy woke with a jolt. Steve glanced over at him for a moment before he focused on the road again, reminded of the irony of the whole situation. Only a few hours ago and he had been the one awakening in a car to the horrors that – judging by the facial expression he could see out of the corner of his eyes – Billy was feeling now as well.

"What the..."

Billy tried to sit up which didn't go as smoothly as he had planned, his movements still sluggish and dazed. His voice however didn't waver. "What the hell are you doing?", he demanded to know.

Steve looked straight ahead, stubbornly refusing to let himself be distracted by what he could feel was probably going to be an impending tantrum. "What does it look like? Driving your sorry ass home."

"Are you fucking kidding me, Harrington?", Billy spat and finally managed to find an upright seating position, looking at Steve incredulously. "I beat you to a pulp and you're driving me home? Why?"

Steve sighed. "I dropped Max off and we noticed you weren't there yet... kinda unsurprising I guess, seeing that we took your car", Steve shrugged with a slightly nervous but at the same time unapologetic expression, "So I figured I'd better check on you, make sure you're not dead, and haul you over there. Didn't want Mrs. Byers to get another shock seeing your mug on her floor, either." He sheepishly thought of the demodog corpse they had stuffed into the fridge. Maybe they should have left a note.

Steve finally let his gaze wander over to Billy, only to see that the color seemed to drain from his face.

"You're telling me Max is already back home and now \*you're\* bringing me... Wait. I said wait! You can't just drive me there."

"Why not?" Steve honestly didn't feel like putting up with this, seeing

how things had really not exactly ended on the best terms.

"Because-"

But Billy didn't finish the sentence. "At least let me switch into the driver's seat. And... how are you planning on getting home if you're taking my car?"

"No can do. You might have a concussion man, so just listen for once. And I'll manage. I still know how to walk." It was kind of ironic to tell the guy who had beat him unconscious that he might be unfit to drive. But that's just the way it was, Steve had already getting used to being up and about again. At first, it had probably been the adrenaline that kept him on his toes. By now, after he had dropped all the kids off, he was genuinely fine with driving again, even if he didn't look like it.

Honestly, it probably hadn't been the best idea to go about things the way they did, he knew that. But it just seemed too tempting to postpone the inevitability of dealing with Billy, especially since they expected him to be angry (and that was the understatement of the year) once he woke up. And he really didn't want the kids around once that happened. So far, Billy's reaction had actually been pretty mellow, but that might be related to the fact that he was buckled in in the passenger's seat in a moving car and any attempt at a fight wouldn't be beneficial to either of them.

They didn't really talk for the rest of the route. Steve chalked Billy's uncharacteristic quiet up to the situation - getting drugged and stuff - but when he finally pulled in in front of Billy's house he had the feeling that he might have been wrong about that. He had a bad feeling when he watched Billy who had gone stiff and didn't seem confident or relieved to be home. Steve looked at him, about to open his mouth, but before he could say something, the door of the house swung open and someone stormed outside.

"There you are, where the fuck have you been?!"

The guy, presumably Billy's dad, came up to the car and exchanged enraged looks between the vehicle, Billy and Steve. None of them were in the best condition. "Care to explain what this is all about?"

Now while Steve's dad might be a grade A douche, he had to admit that Mr. Hargrove downright scared him, the way he seemed to grit his teeth as he looked at Billy almost threateningly. Steve would have thought that an adult might behave differently than that when there was an outside party involved - not the best first impression to give someone outside your family, that was for sure - but Billy's dad either didn't care or felt this situation was too urgent or unacceptable to warrant social manners. Steve looked at Billy who was staring straight ahead, either at a loss of words or quietly rebelling, or both.

Steve spoke up. "Mr. Hargrove. My name's Steve, I'm Billy's schoolmate. I gotta admit, we had a uh, complication", he said as he ran a hand through his hair, fishing for something to say, "there are these guys who're having a problem with me, some royal douchebags from basketball, you know. Uh, anyway, those idiots decided they were real cowards, so they followed me out to the parking lot and then bam, just ambushed me. Luckily, Billy was around and helped me out. But that's how we ended up looking like this."

He could feel Billy's eyes on him. Admittedly, he was kind of proud of himself for coming up with this story on the spot, but they weren't in the clear yet. Billy's dad was glancing between the two of them, his gaze still suspicious, but his aggression seemingly a little bit less than before.

"Don't worry though, the other guys look way worse," Steve added and laughed awkwardly.

"Then what happened to the car? And why aren't you driving?", Billy's dad asked. Steve got the impression he almost spat the words out every time he addressed Billy.

"Billy hit his head during our fight, so I offered to drive. I gotta say though ... I'm not really the best driver, see, and then with a different car and those guys chasing us... just bumped into something in a hurry, sorry about that." He scratched his head apologetically.

Billy's dad looked at him for a moment, his expression still stern. Then he cleared his throat and said: "Well... thank you, Steve, for bringing my boy here." To Billy, he added: "Come on, let's go."

Billy promptly left the car. Steve was unsure what to do for a moment, but then quickly turned off the ignition, took the key and left as well, handing the car keys over. Billy was facing away from him as his dad rummaged in his back pocket and pulled out his wallet.

"I can call you a cab from inside."

"It's alright, I'll just walk."

"Then here, take this as gas money for your troubles," he said, holding a ten dollar bill in his hands.

"Oh, that's not necessary, Mr. Hargrove." Steve put his hands up awkwardly.

"I insist." His eyes emphasized the message. Steve took the money, forcing a semi-polite smile and mumbling his thanks.

"Well, I'll... uh, see you around then," Steve said to Billy, feigning... what, comradery?

Billy looked at him for a moment before turning around. "Yeah."

He and his dad walked towards their house, with Mr. Hargrove's hand on Billy's neck as he steered him with purpose. Steve noticed that Billy had flinched at the touch.

Steve watched them disappear into the house. For a moment, he stood there, uncertain, with a strange feeling in his gut. Then he turned to walk.

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One month passed quickly with things returning as much to "normal" as they could after you came into contact with something as life-changing as the Upside Down. School was awkwardness and mundaneness in one, with people whispering behind his back about his bruises that were hard to overlook. Coupled with Billy's which were less bad, but nonetheless there, and the rumor mill seemed to explode. Steve avoided questions. He didn't want to talk about it, usually waved it off with non-committal comments and just left

people to their gossip. He did, however, witness Billy shoving a student into the lockers once, raising the heads of everyone present in the hallways. The gossiping lessened a bit after that. Steve certainly didn't see that particular student talk about them again.

And that was how he came to be where he was at this very moment, taking a break at the school parking lots after having dropped off Dustin for the Snow Ball and sitting quietly in his car. He felt... strange, having seen Nancy, but being fully aware of the finality of their situation... and being fine with it. Still, he wanted a little bit of time to himself before he would head back home, just some fresh air and a breather. He certainly didn't want to be bothered and, lost in his thoughts, he didn't even really notice another car that had pulled in before he finally exited the car.

"Well, if it isn't King Harrington," someone drawled. Even without the specific nickname, Steve could have recognized the voice anywhere by now. It didn't bode well and made him want to roll his eyes, sigh or bang his head against a surface all at the same time.

"I thought we were over this," he replied, turning around to come face to face with Billy. He was styled over the top as always, doubtlessly having spent an eternity in front of the mirror (more than even Steve himself who also took his time, he had to admit), but he looked tired. There were bags under his eyes and a purple bruise on his face. Steve wondered if he had been in another fight again. It was the first time they were really talking to each other since he had dropped Billy off at his house.

Billy was standing next to his car in that strange way of his that looked casual but at the same time like model-worthy posing. He took a drag of his cigarette, exhaling the smoke before he spoke: "Why don't you tell me what exactly it is you think we're over with, pretty boy."

"This. Us. This stupid game where you call me names, we annoy each other, then trade punches." Steve mimicked as he talked, moving around in an overexaggerated manner to portray their antics. "I mean, I'd have thought that after your last little confrontation with Max you had learned your lesson," he added. He expected a hostile reaction or at the very least some kind of heat, but surprisingly, Billy

didn't seem to bite.

"Relax man, I'm not here to start a fight. Although it really was fun to bash your pretty little face in." He took another drag, smiling his goddamn smile, all flawless and white and entirely too smooth that it should have been off-putting.

"And yet you still call me pretty boy," Steve countered while crossing his arms and leaning against his own car. His tone was relaxed, but his eyes challenging.

Billy cocked his head and smirked again. "A few bruises can never hide what's underneath."

"That sounds... almost mature," Steve exclaimed in mock-surprise. "How kind of you to let me partake in your wisdom." He bowed a little.

"Are those nerd kids rubbing off on you or do you just enjoy talking like a tool?" Billy almost sneered, raising an eyebrow.

"You know, you always talk big, but you actually don't know a first thing about me. Maybe I've always talked like this."

"I could say the same about you."

Billy dropped his cigarette butt and extinguished it with his boot. Then he came a few steps closer.

"You don't know me at all. We're not buddies or anything, Harrington. So don't go meddling and sticking your pretty little head where it doesn't belong."

Steve snorted. "Alright. That's what this is about? Well, huh, first of all, it was not like I had a choice. Not really the first thing I wanted to do, you know, spending my day babysitting four kids and then taking care of you, the biggest baby of them all. Second, you're welcome, you know. And third... I like my head as it is, but I wouldn't say it's little. Gotta self-reflect here. But pretty \*again\*? Aw, thanks."

Billy looked him up and down in that confrontational, provocative way of his, showing his teeth in a humorless smile. "You think you're

really funny, huh? Just don't come near me anymore if you know what's good for you."

"And you took one month to come up with the courage to talk to me or what? I didn't intend to 'come near you' at all. As if I cared about this bullshit." Steve inwardly flinched, reminding himself unpleasantly of Nancy's 'bullshit'-tirade, her drunk face annoyingly fresh in his mind. He hated it; he wanted to be over it and he most certainly didn't want to be that kind of person.

He thought Billy would have a comeback for sure, but he just furrowed his brow and looked irritated. "Good."

"Fine," Steve said stubbornly, but regretted it as Billy turned around to walk away. That's not how he wanted this to end. He sighed silently, shaking his head. "Wait..."

Billy stopped in his track, but didn't turn around.

"What happened to your face?" Steve had to ask. He wasn't sure if he was afraid of what he would find or rather if he already knew but didn't want to acknowledge it. Billy Hargrove was a guy who made a lot of enemies, right? But he didn't have any bruises on his knuckles and Steve wasn't blind. Stupid, maybe a little, he could admit that, but there had been this suspicion deep in his mind ever since he had met Billy's dad.

"Thought you didn't care. It's my bullshit problem, right? Don't have enough kids you gotta save from the big bad wolf?", Billy asked over his shoulder. Steve noticed that he had a dark bruise on his neck as well, leading further down and disappearing behind the collar of his jacket. It was an ugly purple spot, even starker than the one on his eye. Billy didn't wait for a reply and continued walking towards the car door.

Before he quite knew what he was doing, Steve had walked up to him and grabbed his wrist.

Billy whipped around and looked at their hands and then at Steve's face, frowning. Steve had the feeling that he was going to hit him again and that he should let go. Somehow, he still held on though, as if glued to the other person.

"I didn't mean that. I do care," he said softly and realized that, strangely enough, it was the truth. Since when? Him, caring about goddamn Billy Hargrove who tried to make his life hell? But then again, it wasn't as if he would be glad if something happened to him. He was a tough nut to crack, but that didn't mean that he didn't deserve some human decency as well. Right now, he was staring intently at Steve who hardly dared to move, meeting his gaze with a sudden feeling of shyness and uncertainty.

Billy moved in and kissed him, just a quick press of lips, closing them on Steve's bottom lip and pulling once before moving away. The hot wetness left an electrifying feeling as Steve stood there, stunned. He looked confused and straight ahead at nothing, avoiding direct eye contact. He knew Billy's gaze was directed at him, searching, but a little wavering, and it suddenly made sense. 'I get it now,' he thought. He saw all the moments between them in a different light. He always thought that Billy was being an ass when he closed in on him, taunting him, provoking. And yeah, well, he was an ass. But it wasn't only that. When they had met for the first time at that Halloween party, a deep wordless exchange of lingering gazes that made him even miss Nancy leaving. Every time Billy crowded him during basketball, even giving him advice, and staring at him in the showers, calling him a pretty boy... Doubtlessly, there had always been a spark of electricity between them. He just hadn't realized or understood what it really meant.

Steve took a shaky breath and slowly raised his eyes to reciprocate Billy's gaze. Then he kissed him. It was completely on impulse and he didn't expect Billy to kiss him back as vehemently as he did.

It was a flurry of movement and a deep exhilarating feeling as Billy grasped the back of his head, moving them both so he could press Steve against his car, never breaking the kiss, tongues intertwining. Steve's hands grappled for leverage, finally grasping Billy's hair and jacket. He had never kissed like this before; never kissed a guy and certainly never kissed someone who was as aggressive as Billy. It seemed that he was brash in every aspect of his life, tongue pushing roughly into Steve's mouth in a dominating and all-consuming manner, sliding against his own tongue wetly, coaxing it to meet with his. Steve gasped as Billy moved his hands lower, brushing over his

back before finally cupping his buttocks and squeezing, pressing him even harder against the car. His heart was pounding, blood rushing in his ears, as Billy finally sucked on Steve's bottom lip one last time before pulling away, his gaze intent and making Steve feel all kinds of things he didn't know or care to categorize.

They stared at each other wordlessly, their faces still only inches apart, when Billy suddenly heaved him up, grips under his butt and thighs, causing Steve to wrap his legs around Billy, carrying him a few steps over to the back of the car as if he weighed nothing.

Steve made contact with the cold surface of the car, his back pressing into the glass of the rear window as Billy moved over him and started kissing him again. That's when a bright light blinded them, causing them to hastily separate as another car pulled up. It was a mother with her daughter, obviously accompanying her to the Snow Ball. She gave Billy and Steve a slightly suspicious look as they gathered stuff from the car.

Steve swallowed, realizing suddenly how dry his throat had become. Billy, who seemed as out of breath as himself, still looked at him with an intensity that made him nervous, for more reasons than one. The moment had obviously passed, with the little girl chattering to her mom next to them.

“Uh... so I said I'll pick Dustin up at eleven,” Steve offered.

The corner of Billy's mouth went up. “That's when I'm getting Max, too.”

Steve was trying for a smile, but it didn't come out quite as he wanted, feeling forced and unnatural. His palms were slightly sweaty. “Alright... see you around.”

Billy looked at him for a long moment, then said: “Yeah. Later, pretty boy.”

Steve sighed, disgruntled, but also smiling, and they both got into their cars and drove off.

**Author's Note:**

I binge watched ST and had a little bit of Harringrove stuck in my head. :P I'm not entirely happy with the writing and it's all kinda chaotic, but it's been lying around for about a week now, so I thought I'd publish the first chapter for now. Let me know what you think and if you have any suggestions as to what you want to see. :) I only have a idea of a scene I want to include next chapter and a vague idea of how it'll end, but that's all. xD

I think there will only be one more chapter, but let's see how it goes.